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Chair: Mr. Salinas Burgos ..... (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 85: The law of transboundary aquifers
(A/66/116 and Add.1)

1. **Mr. Cancela** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, said that the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers adopted by the International Law Commission and annexed to General Assembly resolution 63/124 were the first systematic formulation of international law at the global level on that topic. The four delegations endorsed the Commission's approach of formulating general rules on the topic of transboundary aquifers as normative propositions. The draft articles recognized that each aquifer State had sovereignty over the portion of a transboundary aquifer or aquifer system located within its territory, and that it should exercise its sovereignty in accordance with international law and, in particular, with the principles and rules set out in the draft articles. They also set out the obligation for States not to cause significant harm to other aquifer States, to prevent or control the pollution thereof, and to support the exchange of technical knowledge and experience among developing States with a view to strengthening cooperation among them in managing the transboundary aquifer or aquifer system.

2. In that connection, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay had signed the Agreement on the Guaraní Aquifer on 2 August 2010, along with a joint declaration for its implementation. That Agreement was a highly relevant political and technical instrument that sought to strengthen cooperation and integration among the signatories and expanded the scope of concerted action for the conservation and sustainable utilization of the transboundary water resources of the Guaraní aquifer system.

3. The Agreement also reaffirmed the principles governing the protection of natural resources and the sovereign responsibility of States for the rational utilization of those resources, in accordance with the 1972 Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. It also served as an important contribution from the region on the topic, representing as it did the first multilateral agreement on activities involving a transboundary aquifer in South America.

4. In its resolution 63/124, the General Assembly had recommended that States concerned should make appropriate bilateral or regional arrangements for the proper management of their transboundary aquifers on the basis of the principles enunciated in the draft articles. Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay had been the first countries to implement that resolution by signing the Agreement on the Guaraní Aquifer. They believed that all delegations would be comfortable with a decision by the General Assembly to adopt the draft articles annexed to its resolution 63/124 in the form of a declaration of principles on the law of transboundary aquifers.

5. **Mr. Murase** (Japan) said that the topic of transboundary aquifers was of vital interest to the international community, as the vast majority of States shared aquifers with their neighbours. Many of those aquifers were heavily over-exploited, seriously depleted and choked by pollution. The draft articles adopted by the Commission were therefore intended to clarify the rules for their proper management and reasonable and equitable utilization. The draft articles, which resulted from the collective effort of the Commission and the international community, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, were scientifically and technically sound, incorporated the views of the majority of Member States and formed the basis of General Assembly resolution 63/124.

6. Although several transboundary aquifer-related projects had taken inspiration from the draft articles and resolution 63/124, further concrete efforts were needed in order to determine the form that the articles might take. In the view of his delegation, the draft articles should therefore be endorsed as guidelines for the proper management of aquifers.

7. He urged the Committee to consider the topic of transboundary aquifers on the basis of the draft resolution circulated by his delegation, which endorsed the principles embodied in the draft articles as a declaration of guidelines by the General Assembly and envisaged a framework convention as the final form of the draft articles, to be considered at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. His delegation stood ready to cooperate with all delegations to ensure that progress was achieved on the topic of transboundary aquifers.

8. **Ms. Escobar Pacas** (El Salvador) said that her delegation was convinced of the urgent need to establish international norms and measures for the protection of aquifers. The draft articles adopted by the Commission represented an appropriate mechanism in that regard. They struck a balance between the rights and the obligations of States, as they acknowledged that States had sovereignty over aquifers located in their territory, but that such sovereignty must be exercised in accordance with all the obligations laid down in the draft articles and in international law.

9. The importance for humankind of life-supporting underwater resources in all regions of the world — which was acknowledged in the preamble to the draft articles — should serve as the benchmark for the interpretation of all provisions of the draft articles, especially the obligations concerning the protection and management of aquifers. Moreover, the draft articles should be complemented by other norms of international law, such as those governing State responsibility, which had also been codified by the International Law Commission.

10. The final form of the draft articles should ensure their full effectiveness and should be conducive to appropriate measures for halting excessive extraction and pollution. From a legal standpoint, a convention would constitute a binding instrument that would make such measures enforceable.

11. **Mr. Sánchez Contreras** (Mexico) said that the draft articles covered a range of important and complex issues which should, in the long term, be enshrined in an international legal instrument. However, before embarking upon the negotiation of a binding instrument, sufficient time should be allowed for further reflection. Such a period would also allow States to continue developing regional and bilateral practice, which might then provide input for the possible development of an international instrument.

12. His delegation believed that the law of transboundary aquifers should remain on the agenda of the General Assembly and should be taken up again in a few years, with consideration given to whether the practice of States was in conformity with the draft articles.

13. It was premature for the General Assembly to endorse the draft articles as "principles" or to "recommend" that States should make bilateral or regional arrangements "in accordance with" the draft articles. Rather, it should, for the time being, simply "encourage" States to consider such arrangements "on the basis of" the draft articles.

14. **Mr. Sharma** (India) said that aquifers were important as life-supporting groundwater resources for humankind, particularly given the increasing demand for freshwater around the world, and should be protected, managed and utilized adequately. With the aim of balancing States' right to utilize aquifers in an equitable and reasonable manner with their obligation to avoid causing significant harm to other aquifer States, the drafted articles contained a number of useful provisions relating to equitable and reasonable utilization, the obligation to cooperate, regular exchange of data and the obligation to protect, preserve and manage aquifer systems. His delegation was convinced that the draft articles serve as a useful guide for States in making bilateral or regional arrangements on the topic.

15. While his delegation welcomed the draft resolution presented by Japan, it still believed that there was a lack of adequate scientific knowledge on the management and protection of aquifers and that States needed more assistance to help them understand the complex issues involved before they could make a decision on the outcome of the draft articles.

16. Given the complexity and scarcity of State practice concerning transboundary aquifers, his delegation believed that the time was not ripe for the elaboration of a legally binding instrument, such as a convention, based on the draft articles.

17. **Ms. Leskovar** (Slovenia) said that her country had huge, highly sensitive bodies of groundwater with a low self-cleaning capacity, a fact which had to be taken into account in water management policies, laws and programmes at the local, national or regional levels. As water management transcended geographical and political boundaries, Slovenia focused on regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation for the management of its water bodies. In that connection, it was a party to various bilateral and international treaties dealing with water management, including the Framework Agreement on the Sava River and the Danube River Protection Convention. Slovenia also sought to achieve the objectives of the European Union *acquis* relating to water management, in particular the European Union Water Framework Directive.

18. Her delegation welcomed the International Law Commission's draft articles on the topic, which provided a good legal basis for the global coordination of integrated solutions for the management of transboundary aquifers. Her delegation remained flexible as to the form the draft articles might take.

19. **Ms. Silek** (Hungary) said that her delegation had always been at the forefront of efforts to advance the debate on the topic of transboundary aquifers and had agreed that the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers should be based on the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses. Unfortunately, that Convention itself was still not in effect, owing to the high threshold of State approvals required for its entry into force. Even though conflicts were inevitable in international environmental law owing to geological and soil-conditioned differences among States, her delegation was flexible enough to accept compromises both on the substantive issues and on the form of an eventual legal instrument. Her delegation would therefore not insist on the elaboration of a convention, although it hoped that the draft articles could be accepted in the form of a declaration.

20. **Ms. Abdul Hamid** (Malaysia) said that the draft articles would provide useful guidelines for States entering into bilateral or regional arrangements for the management of transboundary aquifers. Nonetheless, her delegation was of the view that the General Assembly should consider the final form of the draft articles at a later stage, which would give States time to review the draft articles and develop sufficient practice on the topic.

21. **Mr. Hill** (United States of America) said that the Commission's work on transboundary aquifers constituted an important advance in providing a possible framework for the reasonable utilization and protection of underground aquifers. Nevertheless, there was still much to learn about transboundary aquifers in general, and specific aquifer conditions and State practice varied widely. The draft articles also went beyond current law and practice. His delegation therefore believed that context-specific arrangements, as opposed to a global framework treaty, provided the best way to address pressures on transboundary groundwaters.

22. His delegation was not convinced that there would be sufficient support for converting the draft articles into a global convention. Moreover, the draft articles seemed to duplicate some areas that already fell within the scope of the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses; the existence of two overlapping framework conventions on the same topic could lead to confusion.

23. **Mr. Dahmane** (Algeria) said that his delegation had supported the approach adopted by the International Law Commission and followed by the Sixth Committee and the General Assembly in its resolution 63/124, namely to take note of the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers and to consider, at a later stage, the elaboration of a convention on the basis of the draft articles. His delegation emphasized the importance of bilateral and regional cooperation through the conclusion of agreements and the introduction of joint cooperation mechanisms between States sharing aquifers.

24. His delegation also stressed the importance of having precise knowledge about the extent of shared water resources, their volume and quality; protecting the rights of countries sharing aquifers to have sufficient quantities for their development needs; integrating the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the countries concerned, through appropriate protection and good-faith cooperation; and strengthening national regulatory measures and bilateral or subregional cooperation mechanisms in order to ensure the effective protection of aquifer water resources from all forms of pollution.

25. The draft articles should take into account the situation of areas and countries under occupation by mentioning them in draft article 18, which dealt with the protection of transboundary aquifers in time of armed conflict. His delegation believed that it was important for the Arabic version of the draft articles to use standard Arabic technical terms rather than literal translations of English terms, which could create confusion in the minds of users of the Arabic version. Lastly, it was premature to enter into any discussion about the final form of the draft articles at the current session.

26. **Mr. Kowalski** (Portugal) said that the draft articles could contribute positively to the proper management of existing transboundary aquifers around the world and to the promotion of peace, especially as they made reference to the human right to water and

the principles of environmental law. The solutions set out in the draft articles were in line with the development of contemporary international law, given that some of them were similar to the provisions of the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

27. Even though the draft articles were also compatible with European law on transboundary aquifers, which was already binding on his country, his delegation's position was that the draft articles should be developed into an international framework convention.

28. **Mr. Kalinin** (Russian Federation) said that the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers upheld State sovereignty over natural resources, the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary aquifers and the obligation not to cause significant harm to such natural resources. Of particular importance was the draft article establishing the general obligation of States to cooperate and to establish joint mechanisms of cooperation.

29. While his Government was open to the possibility that the draft articles could be turned into a legally binding document, it believed it was premature to talk about drafting a convention. His delegation supported the timeline proposed by Japan. As a first step, it would be appropriate to recommend that States take note of the draft articles in their practice and conclude bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements. In that regard, he noted the agreement concluded by four Latin American States concerning the Guaraní Aquifer. Existing international agreements dealing with the transboundary aquifer regime, in particular the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, should be taken into consideration in any future decision on drafting a convention.

30. **Ms. Nguyen** Thi Tuong Van (Viet Nam) said that an international legal framework was needed to enable States to cooperate in the utilization and management of transboundary aquifers. Many such bodies of water were shared between two or more States that might have sovereignty over them, as recognized under international law, particularly environmental law. In her delegation's view, the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers struck the right balance between States' rights and obligations under international law in relation to their share of transboundary aquifers.

31. However, given the complexity of the topic and the paucity of information on State practice regarding the utilization, preservation and management of transboundary aquifers, States should be given more time to further examine the issue. Accordingly, her delegation believed it was premature to discuss the final form of the draft articles, and it would support a General Assembly resolution to include the topic in the agenda of the sixty-seventh session.

32. **Ms. Cabello de Daboin** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the objectives of the draft articles as a whole could be achieved through bilateral or regional arrangements for the protection, development, utilization, preservation and management of transboundary aquifers. In that connection, the draft articles could serve as a set of guidelines for State practice in that area. Her delegation believed that the draft articles should take the form of a non-binding instrument, rather than a normative instrument, and that it was premature to convene a working group to develop a convention on the topic.

33. Moreover, given the similarities between the draft articles and the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, it would be preferable to wait and see how that Convention was implemented in practice before considering the adoption of another legally binding instrument on transboundary aquifers.

34. Her delegation stressed the importance of indicating that the expression "vital human needs" used in article 5, paragraph 2, of the draft articles referred to the vital human needs of the population of the aquifer State. It was also important to examine, from a technical standpoint, the scope of the term "utilization" as contained in article 2, paragraph (e), since the draft articles as a whole dealt not only with the management and utilization of the aquifer or aquifer system, but also with the preservation and protection thereof.

35. **Mr. Li** Linlin (China) said that the draft articles provided a good legal basis for the study of issues related to the utilization and management of transboundary aquifers and would have a major impact on the development of the law on the topic. With regard to the final form of the draft articles, his

delegation agreed with many of the views expressed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/116) to the effect that conditions were not yet ripe for the development of a convention on the topic.

36. The issue of transboundary aquifers was complex and State practice on the topic varied widely. The draft articles could take the form of a non-legally binding resolution or declaration and serve as general guidelines for State practice in that regard. His delegation reserved the right to submit further comments on the draft articles.

37. **Mr. Borje** (Philippines) said that, as demand for freshwater increased, new questions arose with regard to water resource ownership, use, protection and development, especially in areas where water resources traversed international political boundaries. In that regard, it was important to develop an international legal regime that outlined the relevant rights and obligations. The draft articles annexed to General Assembly resolution 63/124 provided a basis for the consideration of the full range of issues concerning transboundary aquifers. His Government stood ready to work on the ideal final form of the draft articles and on the draft resolution proposed by Japan.

38. Solid scientific grounding was vital to the development of an international legal regime on transboundary aquifers, and there was a need to deepen stakeholder understanding of the issues. To that end, the International Hydrological Programme would play an important role in strengthening the envisioned law on transboundary aquifers. His Government called for the urgent completion of transboundary aquifer mapping and the establishment of spatial and temporal management regimes for use in policy and decision-making.

39. **Ms. Saab** (Lebanon), reiterating the views her Government had relayed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/116), said that the definitions of "aquifer" and "aquifer State" could benefit from further elaboration. She highlighted inconsistencies between the terminology of the draft articles and that of the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, such as the use of "transboundary" in draft article 2, subparagraph (c), as compared to the term "international" in the corresponding part of the text of the Convention; another example was the use of the same definition for "discharge zone" in the draft articles as had been used for "international aquifers" in the Convention.

40. The underlying assumption of the draft articles was that participating States were at peace with each other and had good-neighbourly relations. That assumption might restrict the applicability of some provisions, such as those referring to the assessment of future needs. Similarly, ensuring equitable and reasonable utilization depended on the trustworthiness of States to share reliable figures.

41. Damage from the pollution of aquifers was more difficult to remedy than harm caused by the pollution of surface water; it therefore needed to be dealt with more strictly. In that connection, her delegation felt that draft article 6 (Obligation not to cause significant harm), in addition to the obligation of aquifer States to "prevent significant harm", should include the obligation of recharge zone States not to deplete or pollute water sources that recharged the aquifers. Her delegation looked forward to further cooperation with the International Law Commission on the best way to proceed on the content and form of the draft articles.

42. **Mr. Sahinol** (Turkey) said that, judging from the views of States contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/66/116 and Add.1), the draft articles had room for improvement, in particular with regard to the way they reflected certain scientific issues. In particular, there were technical errors in the definitions of certain terms, including "aquifer", "recharge aquifer" and "discharge zones". It would be impossible to agree on the final form of the draft articles unless agreement was reached on the substance thereof. The Committee should continue its work on the draft articles, look at State practice and return to the question of form later.

43. **Mr. Archondo** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his delegation shared some of the concerns expressed by the delegations of China, Lebanon, Mexico, Russia and Turkey, to the effect that a detailed discussion of the draft articles was premature. He noted, moreover, that the Plurinational State of Bolivia had not entered into any agreements with its neighbours concerning transboundary aquifers.

44. **Mr. Zemet** (Israel), reiterating the strategic importance of water resources in general, and aquifers in particular, said that, in developing rules regarding water resources, due consideration must be given to the fact that aquifers were vulnerable to all types of

pollution and took longer to self-clean than surface waters. Israel remained of the view that the approach adopted by the Study Group of the International Law Association on the draft articles should have been embraced by the Commission, particularly with regard to the treatment on an equal footing of the two general principles that had gained the recognition of States, namely the equitable and reasonable utilization of aquifers and the obligation not to cause significant harm to other aquifer States. That approach, whereby neither principle prevailed over the other, was consistent with that adopted in the Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers (1966), as updated by the Berlin Rules on Water Resources (2004).

45. Although the general principles identified in the draft articles could serve as guidelines for aquifer States, his delegation was not convinced that it would be appropriate to adopt the draft articles in the form of a convention.

46. **Ms. Le Fraper du Hellen** (France) said that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) deserved recognition for its substantial scientific and technical contributions in relation to transboundary aquifers. Her delegation was familiar with the draft articles and had commented on them in the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/116 and Add.1). The principles set forth in the draft articles had served as a basis for the development of regional agreements. Such agreements were a first step, but the time was ripe to begin real negotiations on the draft articles, which were balanced and in line with previous relevant conventions. She called for a specific timetable for negotiations in the Sixth Committee. That would be shorter than the one proposed by Japan.

47. **Mr. Pavlichenko** (Ukraine) said that the draft articles established that relations between aquifer States were founded on the joint management of dynamic aquifer resources. Meanwhile, in most cases, the exploitation of confined aquifers was accompanied by a reduction in aquifer storage capacity associated with layer compression, which could lead to reduced water levels in transboundary aquifers in other States. Given that it was practically impossible to reverse that process using technological means, it was noteworthy that the draft articles did not provide for a mechanism to offset the resulting financial losses. Although draft article 6 concerned the "obligation not to cause significant harm", the concept of "harm" was not defined. The drafting of a convention would require such a definition, separating the concepts of "harm caused by aquifer depletion" and "harm caused by aquifer pollution". The criteria for what constituted significant or insignificant harm would also need to be defined. In that connection, he noted that Ukraine was not a party to any bilateral or regional agreements concerning transboundary aquifers.

48. **Mr. Zappala'** (Italy) said that while the draft articles were important as a source of inspiration for the drafting of bilateral treaties, there was doubt as to whether it was the right time to transform them into a convention. His Government had not ruled out that possibility and believed that work in that direction was needed. His delegation was prepared to work constructively with other delegations to that end.

49. **Mr. Bonifaz** (Peru) said that the draft articles, while a significant step towards the conservation of aquifers, posed a major legal and scientific challenge. The matter was an extremely sensitive issue for his country, where a number of such aquifers existed, and the relevant governmental organs were studying the implications of the draft articles. The issue was also of great significance for developing countries in general. No definitive decision should be taken on the draft articles, as State practice needed to be studied further.

50. **Ms. Aureli** (Observer for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that groundwater contained in aquifers represented 97 per cent of the total freshwater resources on the planet. UNESCO studies had established that aquifers provided a significant portion of the world's drinking water supply and were often the only source of drinking water in arid zones; moreover, aquifers almost fully supported food production and agriculture.

51. The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme had devoted significant time and effort to collecting information on groundwater resources contained in aquifers, understanding their role, observing changes over time and identifying options for enhancing benefits from aquifer exploitation. Studies conducted by the Programme had demonstrated that significant quantities of groundwater resources could be found in transboundary aquifers in every region of the world. Their storage capacity contributed to the overall reduction of risk and uncertainty regarding water availability and helped bridge

prolonged dry periods in areas where reduced water levels were expected, owing to the growing impact of climate change.

52. Special effort was required to give decision makers and people in general a better sense of the relevance of that invisible underground resource. Education and training were at the centre of that effort, which UNESCO was committed to spearheading through its International Hydrological Programme. Its activities were implemented through its secretariat, national committees, regional offices, centres established under the auspices of UNESCO and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands.

53. Over the past decade, the Programme had launched the International Transboundary Aquifer Resources Management project, which aimed to compile a global assessment and an international inventory of transboundary aquifers. The Programme had also collaborated with major international organizations, national authorities and academia to foster improved cooperation and achieve a clearer understanding of the vulnerability and dynamics of transboundary aquifers and classify hundreds of aquifers. Given that a multi-disciplinary approach was required for the effective management of water resources, UNESCO supported national authorities by offering training in transboundary aquifers management and facilitating cooperation among scientists from different disciplines. Networks of groundwater experts met regularly to exchange knowledge on transboundary aquifer systems, and pilot projects were under way to further develop knowledge and cooperation among scientists and relevant national authorities.

54. Without doubt, the International Hydrological Programme would use the draft articles as highly effective guidelines for the sustainable management of transboundary aquifer systems.

Agenda item 167: Observer status for the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States in the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.6/66/L.2)

55. **The Chair** recalled that, at its fourth meeting, the Committee had decided to defer action on draft resolution A/C.6/66/L.2 in order to allow delegations more time for consultations.

56. **Ms. Kocharyan** (Armenia), speaking in explanation of position, and supported by **Ms. Demetriou** (Cyprus), said that her delegation could not take action on the draft resolution at the current stage. Observer status should be granted based on the criteria set out in General Assembly decision 49/426. More information was needed on the status of the organization and its activities in order to decide whether the organization's activities furthered the purposes of the United Nations.

57. **Mr.** Igor **Panin** (Russian Federation) said that, although the Council, as an intergovernmental organization, satisfied the criteria mentioned earlier, its structure and membership policy, which was tied to a common language and ethnicity, and the extent to which its activities covered matters of interest to the General Assembly warranted further examination. Consideration of the item should therefore be postponed until the sixty-seventh session.

58. **Mr. Şahinol** (Turkey) said that the Council met the criteria set out in decision 49/426 and that all relevant information had been provided in accordance with that decision. His delegation was prepared to provide additional information on request at the meeting or during the current session but did not wish to postpone consideration of the item to the following session. Accordingly, he asked the representatives of Armenia and Cyprus to explain the reasons behind their objections.

59. **The Chair** said that, in view of the questions raised, no action could be taken on the draft resolution.

Agenda item 168: Observer status for the Union of South American Nations in the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.6/66/L.3)

60. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana) announced that Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Luxemburg, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Spain, Slovenia and Uganda had joined the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.6/66/L.3.

61. *Draft resolution A/C.6/66/L.3 was adopted.*

Agenda item 170: Observer status for the Central European Initiative in the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.6/66/L.5)

62. *Draft resolution A/C.6/66/L.5 was adopted.*

63. **Mr. Ismaili** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), speaking in explanation of position, said that his Government had devoted particular attention to advancing regional cooperation, which was of paramount significance for the progress of the Central European region and its integration into the European Union. Having joined the Central European Initiative in the early years of its establishment, his Government considered its goals and objectives to be as valid in 2011 as they were in 1989, since the current difficult economic times required greater solidarity on both global and regional levels.

64. His Government had supported inviting the Central European Initiative to participate in the work of the General Assembly as an observer. Regrettably, his delegation had been unable to join the sponsors of the draft resolution because the associated explanatory memorandum (A/66/191) did not correctly reflect the name of his country — Macedonia — under which his country became and still was a member of the Initiative. That name should have been reflected in the explanatory memorandum as a statement of fact with regard to that organization and regardless of all other circumstances and considerations. As his delegation's commitment to strengthening regional cooperation remained resolute, however, it had joined the consensus for the adoption of the draft resolution.

65. **Mr. Venizelos** (Greece), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was regrettable that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had challenged the very name by which it had been admitted to the United Nations. By doing so, it had once more shown a clear disrespect for Security Council resolution 817 (1993), which had been reaffirmed by General Assembly resolution 47/225. The explanation of position also undermined the current political negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations for the resolution of the difference over the name issue, pursuant to Security Council resolution 845 (1993).

66. **Mr. Ismaili** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, stressed that his delegation had always used his country's constitutional name in all oral and written communication within the United Nations and would continue to do so. That was an established practice that had never been questioned. The General Assembly, in this resolution 47/225, decided to admit that the State whose application was contained in document A/47/876-S/25147 to membership in the United Nations. The name of the State on that application was the Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, the name that was being used for the purposes of the United Nations was not the name of his country.

67. **Mr. Venizelos** (Greece), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation was disappointed with the statement made by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continued its pattern of misinterpretation and violation of the United Nations decisions as well as its obligations under the interim accord concluded with Greece, according to which it should negotiate in good faith under the auspices of the United Nations for a mutually acceptable solution over the name issue.

Agenda item 172: Observer status for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.6/66/L.7)

68. **Mr. Kebret** (Ethiopia) announced that Argentina, Italy, Montenegro, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa and Spain had joined the list of sponsors.

69. *Draft resolution A/C.6/66/L.7 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.